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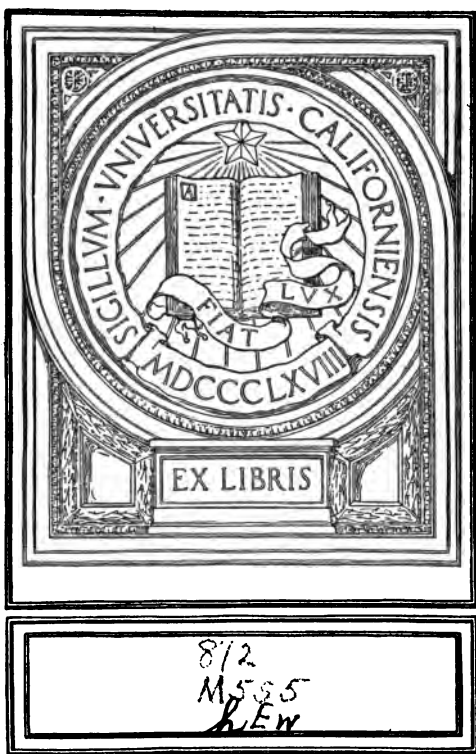
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THE
MERCHANT
OF
GUADALOUPE:
A PLAY,
IN THREE ACTS.

AS IT WAS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre Royal, Margate,

On Tuesday, the 5th of October, 1802.

FROM THE FRENCH OF MERCIER.

By JOHN WALLACE, Esq.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. AND T. CARPENTER,
OLD BOND STREET,

1802.

TO THE
ANNUAL

S. GOSWELL, Printer,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.

P R E F A C E.

SHOULD the present piece ever meet the eye of the French Author, the Translator has, in the first instance, to apologize for making the most trifling alteration in a drama that has so deservedly met with distinguished and unbounded applause upon the French theatre, and increased the fame so long attached to the name of Mercier. That author has, in the most happy manner, carried the simple and interesting story of Mr. Warner, in the novel of Sydney Biddulph (from which production he acknowledges, in his Preface, to have borrowed the story for his play), to nearly double the length of the present piece. The simplicity of the plot has induced the Translator to curtail and leave out many interesting passages, as he was fearful the full length of the original piece might be too tedious for an English audience. The chief alteration he has made, has been, in introducing the character of Mulson at the end of the Second, instead of the First Act, by

which the real situation of the Merchant is not so soon made known to the audience, and, consequently, the interest carried more into the heart of the play.

This piece was performed at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on the 5th of October, 1802; and, it is probable, might have given more interest, had not the principal performer been so inattentive to his part, as to introduce language more of his own composition than the author's, and in some passages he paid so little attention to grammatical chastity, as to excite risibility.

The Translator laments that he is under the necessity of noticing this inattention, but in justice to his work he is compelled to it, in order to do away the unhandsome and *false* remarks that a few of the journalists have been pleased to bestow upon his labour.

The other performers did ample justice to their characters: and the piece, even under the disadvantage mentioned, was extremely well received, and concluded without the slightest mark of disapprobation. A paper called the Sun, has, however, in a very *wise* and *excellent critique* of four lines, observed, that
 “ A young man of fashion, one of the Pic Nics
 “ no doubt, has brought out a play at Mar-
 “ gate :

“gate: to give some idea of its *badness*, it is “stated, that even at Margate it was *damned*.” In order, therefore, to give a better idea of its *badness* (if it really merits that title) than the Sun has been able to do, it is presented to the Public, and it is recommended to the writers for the above paper, upon a future occasion, to know what they are criticizing upon; and not to condemn without taking the pains to discover and point out the defects: and when it is remembered, that the piece was *lent* to the theatre, without any pecuniary motives whatever in favour of the Translator, and was of *great service* to an honest performer, by bringing a crowded audience to his benefit, and only an endeavour to contribute (as far as lay in his power) to the innocent amusements of a watering-place, even that consideration might have spared his poor attempt to please from such illiberal, and he thinks unmerited, remarks.

A *Canterbury paper* has been as *wise* and as *liberal* as the Sun.

The only *just* critiques that have appeared upon this performance were inserted in the Morning Post and Courier; those papers have correctly pointed out the errors and blunders of the actor, and not inconsiderately thrown
2
damnation

damnation upon the author. Such as it is, it is now offered to the public, and to those who take any pleasure in seeing charity rewarded, and pride punished, it may not perhaps prove unentertaining, or unworthy their perusal.

The Translator is much indebted to his brother for the excellent Prologue and Epilogue he wrote upon the occasion, which were extremely well delivered by Mr. Bartley and Mr. Lee, and deservedly applauded.

PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. JAMES WALLACE.

Spoken by Mr. BARTLEY.

EACH infant play (so writes sage Doctor Time)
At first is nurtur'd by a bit of rhyme;
When force it gains, to stand and tread alone,
It quits the strength that foster'd for its own;
The cradle leaves, grows fat upon the stage,
And boasts, what few would talk about, its age.

These trappings, then, the humble bard excuse,
Who stirs, at Friendship's call, his sleepy muse,
And ventures thus, through inoffensive verse,
A brother author's feelings to rehearse.
O ye, who know a parent's fear and joy
In giving to the world a darling boy,
Now sunk in anguish, now with hope elate,
Lift up his offspring, prop its feeble state.
Eleven years have roll'd their course away
Since first he wrote—yet dar'd not *act* his play,
Till busy rumour whisper'd in his ear,
That modest worth would find protection *here*.
Yes, among other gifts, our Thanet's ill
Puts forth compassion's tear, good-nature's smile;
Blends sense with beauty, mirth with virtue's grace,
And shews, where'er we look, an honest face.

Sooth then each soft alarm, each tender care,
And let this little bantling blossom there;
Imperfect thus he comes, just snatch'd away
From closet darkness to meridian day.
But keep in mind, that, should he rise or fall,
His *only interest* is, to please you all.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Woodville (<i>the Merchant</i>),	Mr. LONG.
Mulson,	Mr. BEW.
Mr. Vane,	Mr. TAYLOR.
Servant,	Mr. W. LONG.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Milville,	Mrs. INCHEALD.
Mrs. Vane,	Mrs. BEW.
Lucy,	Miss CLARKE.

Servants, &c. &c. &c.

Scene—*London.*

THE
MERCHANT

OF

GUADALOUPE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Room.

Mr. VANE is sitting at a Table covered with Papers, Letters, &c. and Writing-desk. Mrs. VANE on the other Side, in a Dishabille, sitting in a large Chair.

Mr. Vane.

You lost a considerable sum at play yesterday, Madam; I must beg of you to be more prudent in future.

Mrs. Vane. How disagreeable you are! You forget the days when I win.

Mr. Vane. But you should never lose, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. Come, come, you will run no risk in advancing me an hundred to day; I'll play with the Countess, she is the most foolish creature possible: give me an hundred, I say, and I'll engage to win a thousand.

B

Mr.

Mr. Vane. Well, well, but choose your adversaries: have nothing to do with your prudent and attentive people, who observe every card: let your party consist of the giddy and the foolish; they are the best players.

Mrs. Vane. Oh, leave me alone.

Mr. Vane. But, Madam, it is high time to reprimand you seriously for your other extravagances.

Mrs. Vane. Dear Sir, how often must I repeat to you, that the only thing that could possibly induce me to marry you was to get rid of the ennui that troubled me when single?

Mr. Vane. Madam, I don't wish to deprive you of any of the privileges due to a married woman; run here, run there, invite to your house whom you please, but only have some mercy upon my purse. I find here, in looking over some old letters, one from a near relation, a first cousin; the date is twenty years back; he went to seek his fortune in America, and there died.

Mrs. Vane. How came you to the knowledge of his death?

Mr. Vane. Why, I only suppose so, as I know he was poor, and he never solicited any favour or assistance from me, nor have I heard any thing about him for years.

Mrs. Vane. Pray have you heard any thing of your sister lately? The foolish woman prides herself upon her knowledge in literature.

Mr. Vane. She, I believe, is out of danger.

Mrs. Vane. Has she returned the books I lent her?

Mr.

Mr. Vane. She has.

Mrs. Vane. I beg she may ask for no more, for I positively declare I'll shut up my library; she asks for books as if they cost nothing, and in returning them has the insolence to reproach me for not having read them myself. She's an impudent hussy, and annoys me exceedingly.

Mr. Vane. Well, my dear, we very seldom see her; so there is no reason to complain.

Mrs. Vane. She has the insolent pride to pass for a tender affectionate mother, with her two brats, that she can't stir without; and she is always pouring forth her miserable complaints, and sighing after her stupid deceased husband.

Mr. Vane. She has reason to sigh, for he left her in very indigent circumstances. I always cautioned her, and disapproved of the match, because the fellow was not worth a farthing; her answer was, that he was a good and virtuous man; and so there she is, with her starving children, stuffed up in a fourth story, forced to work for daily subsistence.

Mrs. Vane. For my part, I am determined never to see her more, and I beg of you to tell her so.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. There is a man wishes much to speak with you: he brings intelligence of a Mr. Woodville.

Mr. Vane. Woodville! that's the very name of the relation I just spoke about.

Servant. He says, Sir, he has something particular to communicate to you from a Mr.

B 2

Woodville,

Woodville, a relation of yours, whom he lately saw in America.

Mr. Vane. This is very strange. Shew him in. (*Exit Servant.*) I always thought, somehow, that he was not dead; and yet I have had reason to suppose, and indeed to wish that he was.

Enter WOODVILLE, slowly, meanly attired;
Mr. and Mrs. VANE do not rise from their
Chairs, nor do they ask WOODVILLE to be
seated.

Mrs. Vane. (*Aside.*) How dare my servants let in such a fellow?

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, what is your business with me?

Woodville. Heaven be praised, my dear cousin! what joy it gives me once more to see you! have you quite forgot me?

Mr. Vane. Sir, I really am at a loss to know your meaning.

Woodville. My name is Woodville; I am a near relation of yours.

Mr. Vane. I remember, Sir, having a relation of that name, but I thought him dead long since.

Woodville. He lives, Sir; and you see him now.

Mr. Vane. Sir, it is so long since I have seen or indeed heard any thing about you, that you can hardly expect I should remember you.

Woodville. I see but little alteration in you; I should have known you any where. I, alas! am much more altered; indeed that is not surprising;

prising; fatigues, troubles, unhappiness, a long residence in a foreign climate, all have tended to change my person: do you remember what friends we were?

Mr. Vane. Ay, college friends; I remember we used to play the fool together; but what the devil is that to the purpose? what is your business with me?

Mrs. Vane. (Aside.) This fellow, I suppose, is going to ask charity; I'll send away the servant that let him in.

Woodville. I was settled, Sir, at Guadaloupe.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, and what then?

Woodville. I had amassed, with much labour, a small independence. Condescend, Sir, to listen to my unhappy tale. Having lost a wife and only child, and nothing remaining that attached me to a foreign climate, I resolved to return to England; a love for my native soil spoke to my heart. The vessel on which my little fortune was embarked was wrecked on the coast of Spain; ten of my companions were drowned in endeavouring to save the small remnants of their property.

Mrs. Vane. And I think they were very fortunate, Sir, as they would have had nothing left to live upon.

Woodville. You are right, Madam; I have more than once envied their fate; they are not the most to be pitied. It is with the greatest difficulty I have reached London: oh, Madam! if you knew how much I suffered on the journey, what hardships I have undergone, 't would almost break your heart. Upon my arrival I made inquiries after you: when I heard that
kind

kind Heaven had blessed you with fortune, and that you lived in comfort, it gave me the most lively joy.

Mrs. Vane. Comfort, Sir? (Impertinence!) You seem, Sir, in other countries to have forgot the manners of this.

Woodville. I entreat your pardon, Madam; but from the elegance of your house, the number of your servants, the—

Mrs. Vane. Well, Sir, and what then? Your observations are impertinent.

Woodville. Forgive me, Madam, but the poor man cannot help noticing all that strikes him; he sees, and feels, the extreme distance that separates him from all comfort.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, but you'll permit me to tell you, that your conduct here is very strange; you have introduced yourself in a very extraordinary manner, pretending to bring me news of a relation abroad; but I believe all your story to be an infamous falsehood. You have very kindly chosen me, in preference to all others, to repair the injuries of the elements; and so, because chance has made you my cousin, I am to be answerable for your misfortunes; you are shipwrecked on the coast of Spain, and I am to be responsible for it in London; you arrive here, after an absence of twenty years, and say, Here I am, help me.

Woodville. I have, indeed, that prayer to make.

Mrs. Vane. Sir, all our wishes will not restore to you what you have lost.

Woodville. I know it, Madam, but I am willing to work for a subsistence; and I only
4
implore

implore your benevolence and interest, to get me placed in some office.

Mr. Vane. Why, Sir, in your younger days you were not willing to do any thing; you led a very profligate life; you would attend to nothing.

Woodville. I confess, Sir, my youth was spent in dissipation; I have too often repented of it, but the seduction of pleasures—

Mr. Vane. Seduction of pleasures, Sir! Ay, you left this country involved in debt.

Woodville. Oh, Sir, all my debts I honestly paid; all, I assure you.

Mr. Vane. Your conduct, Sir, caused your uncle to die of a broken heart.

Woodville. Oh! indeed, indeed, Sir, that—that is not true.

Mr. Vane. Not true! Here is a pretty fellow, comes to ask charity, and gives me the lie.

Mrs. Vane. Insolent fellow! Why don't you turn him out of the house?

Woodville. Forgive me, I mean not to offend.

Mrs. Vane. Why, Sir, how dare you—

Woodville. My dear uncle had always the greatest friendship for me, and I loved him. He wrote to me several times; here are some of his letters—*(taking out his pocket-book)*—I shall always preserve them; you will see how he esteemed me!

Mr. Vane. Oh, Sir! I have no wish to see them.

Woodville. He tells me here, he would have done more for me, but his two children claimed all

all he had. His recommendations were of the greatest service to me; your father's memory, Sir, I shall always cherish and revere; and though now I am poor, I was never guilty of an action to make you or myself blush, or determine you to cast me for ever from your protection.

Mrs. Vane. Mr. Vane sometimes relieves the poor, but at present all his money is engaged.

Woodville. Madam, I *only* want some employment; any thing not humiliating I will undertake. I will endeavour to give satisfaction when employed, and no fault shall be found with my attention and correctness; I will be laborious and exact. I request your assistance earnestly, because, Madam, because I— I will at once confess, that on my labour alone depends my subsistence; to-morrow's dawn will see me destitute of bread, if this day your generosity does not relieve me. I have none in this immense town to assist me; you are my only friends; I'll do any thing for support, but, in the name of God, relieve me at this unhappy moment.

Mr. Vane. (*Aside to his wife.*) To get rid of this fellow, I'll give him a crown.

Mrs. Vane. Nonsense! This is the common cant of all beggars; dismiss him immediately, and order him never to return. A pretty kind of a relation indeed!

Mr. Vane. Sir, I can do nothing for you, and so pray retire.

Woodville. I obey, Sir; but before I go, I have

have one favour to ask, which I think you can't refuse me.

Mr. Vane. Come, Sir, no longer conference; what is it?

Woodville. I entreat of you, Sir, to give me the address of your sister: I remember her a child; she, I thought, appeared kind and compassionate.

Mr. Vane. Sir, it's a long time since I have seen her; she leads a very extraordinary life, shuns all her connexions; and, besides, what service can she render you? she is poor, and has two children; however, my servant will give you her address; but it is useless; she has not the means of serving you.

Woodville. Though she is poor, she may do something for me, and if not, we will condole together; she knows what misfortune is, and will perhaps feel the more for me, for my unhappy state.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, but I have now some important business—and—and I must beg of—

Woodville. (In a low voice, with the greatest earnestness, retiring very slowly.) Forgive my importunities; I am driven indeed to extreme distress; if you could do any thing for me—I suffer severely. (Mrs. Vane shakes her head.) Nothing! Well, I am content. True courage consists in suffering with resignation. I am a man, and will maintain the dignity of one; I know, besides, that I have no right to ask of you assistance. Forgive me, Madam, for having presumed to solicit as I have done: the entreaties of a man are always pressing when the heart is loaded. I hope,

c

Madam—

Madam—(*Mrs. Vane rises, and retires without regarding him.*) You, Sir, I hope will never know the misery of falling suddenly in distress.

Mr. Vane. Damn it, Sir, will you leave me? will you leave me, I say? You put me out of all patience; there is no bearing such insolence. Shew this fellow out. (*Woodville withdraws slowly, and with great submission. Mr. Vane goes hastily out, and in a great passion, on the opposite side of the stage.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Mrs. Milville's Room, rather a poor one. Mrs. MILVILLE is at Work: her Maid, or rather Companion, LUCY, enters, and puts a Guinea in her Hand.*

Lucy.

My dear mistress, here is the produce of our little labour. I have found one who is charmed with the delicacy of your work, and who has promised to pay me well, whenever I bring any. There, my dear mistress. (*Giving her the guinea.*)

Mrs. Milville. There is no shame, my dear Lucy, in working to maintain one's self and family. My poor husband did not think to leave me in such a situation.

Lucy. Whenever I meet your brother in his grand equipage, and think how he abandons his virtuous sister, I am almost inclined to cry out to the passers by, and expose his barbarity.

Mrs. Milville. No, my dear friend, let us bear up against misfortune with calmness and resignation. My brother is not naturally bad, but he has been corrupted by a hard-hearted woman, who has destroyed all his good qualities.

Lucy. Why does he reproach you so?

C 2

Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. For not being rich. He is indeed somewhat cruel to me.

Lucy. Your sister-in-law treats you with a contempt that makes me hate her. During your whole illness, at death's door, to send only once to inquire after you! wishing then, no doubt, to hear you were no more! not once to call upon you!—declared hatred, open enmity, is preferable to such a cruel indifference.

Mrs. Milville. The rich, notwithstanding the strict ties of blood, generally break all connexion with the poor; we see that every day; but I have a certain dignity of mind that renders me insensible, or rather superior, to the insult. We should never, my dear Lucy, return evil for evil; that's the way to establish enmity. Patience sometimes gets the better of cruelty and pride. Besides, for my dear children's sake, I should be resigned. My brother may perhaps listen to the calls of nature, and repair, by serving them, the injuries he has done their mother. His fortune, Lucy, is all his own acquiring, and he has a right to dispose of it as he pleases.

Lucy. But, my dear mistress, you make my heart ache to see you at times so melancholy, and sigh so deep.

Mrs. Milville. I then think of the poor children, and see that their wants will increase with their years; but I trust in Providence; and believe me, Lucy, peace resides in my heart. (*A knock at the door.*) See who knocks. (*Lucy goes out, and returns.*)

Lucy. There is a stranger, Madam, wishes to speak with you.

Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. Who can it be? Shew the person in.

Enter WOODVILLE.

Woodville. I see, Madam, I alarm you; but when I shall have made myself known to you, you will be less surprised at the liberty I have taken: I have something particular to communicate to you, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. To me, Sir?

Woodville. Yes, Madam: condescend, I entreat you, to grant me my request.

Mrs. Milville. Be seated, Sir. (*She waves Lucy to retire. Mrs. Milville and Woodville seated.*)

Woodville. I see, Madam, that you do not remember me.

Mrs. Milville. I do not recollect ever to have seen you, Sir.

Woodville. You have seen me, Madam, but you were then very young, and cannot remember me; you were but ten years old, and that is not an age to remember the features of a man, that change in time, especially when care and misery have borne him down. But the name of Woodville may yet be fresh in your memory, who went to America about twenty years ago?

Mrs. Milville. Yes, Sir, I remember him well; he has been long dead.

Woodville. So it was reported; but he still lives; and you now see that relation of yours.

Mrs. Milville. You, Sir, you are—

Woodville. I shall not disguise my situation from

from you; I come, Madam, to solicit your pity.

Mrs. Milville. My pity, Sir? To serve the unfortunate is only a duty.

Woodville. I dare say you already know that my youth was spent in dissipation. Left an orphan in my infancy, and under the tuition of your father, who gave me the best advice, I not paying sufficient regard to it, was soon discarded by my friends. Willing afterwards to make reparation for my follies, I embarked for America; your worthy father gave me the best recommendations, and I was doing well—he died! what a father! what a friend! what a loss for me! I continued in America, and seemed forgot by my relations in Europe.

Mrs. Milville. Did you never write to my brother then?

Woodville. Pardon me, Madam, but eight or ten letters remained unanswered; I thought it was the remembrance of my past follies that made my relations conspire against me; and thinking them sufficiently atoned for by misfortune, I ceased in my turn to write, and false reports were spread of my death. I gained, by my attention, the confidence of the merchant under whom I served; he had a daughter, whom I obtained in marriage; the father was delighted; his daughter loved me; and I was the happiest of men. After an union of fifteen years—pity me—I lost her; that was a deep wound, which time can never heal. The sorrow under which I laboured rendered life insupportable. The sky of America had no further attractions for me; every object that

surrounded me recalled to my mind the loss I had sustained; and I resolved to return to England. Alas! Madam, the coast of Spain was witness to my shipwreck!

Mrs. Milville. Did you lose all?

Woodville. Every thing, Madam, and reduced to the necessity of travelling on foot. But I learned from your generous father, that firmness of mind should always mark the man; and I have borne my hardships with becoming fortitude.

Mrs. Milville. Your pitiful story has penetrated my heart. Have you lost every thing?

Woodville. I see I afflict you, Madam. I have seen better days, 't is true; but I am now reduced to the necessity of soliciting the protection of those who will condescend to aid me; for no one stands more in need than myself.

Mrs. Milville. My dear cousin, I am poor as well as yourself; but I have, thank Heaven, a little to share with a relation still more unfortunate.

Woodville. Oh, Madam!

Mrs. Milville. If you can be satisfied with my frugal repast, you are always welcome. This servant, or rather friend, and my dear children, are my only companions.

Woodville. Madam, your generosity—

Mrs. Milville. I see little of the world, and seldom go out; but I will exert myself, and go out more. I'll use all my endeavours to serve you, and see if I can't procure you some employment; though naturally timid, I feel myself bold when I intercede for a friend.

Woodville. You restore life and hope, and add
grace

grace to generosity ; but as you seem so interested on my account, may I inquire a little into your past life ?

Mrs. Milville. Oh, Sir ! I have suffered many hardships ; I lost a husband whom I adored ; you know from experience how cruel that separation is ; Fortune, that began to smile upon me, vanished with him, and I was left in want with two little daughters.

Woodville. Two little daughters !

Mrs. Milville. Yes, Sir. I had sufficient courage to see my situation without trembling ; I resolved to renounce the world, that only caresses the rich, and to live in retirement. But may I ask how you came acquainted with my address ?

Woodville. From your brother, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. From my brother ?—what ! have you seen him ?

Woodville. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. Well.

Woodville. I had the honour of being admitted to his apartments ; I told him the same melancholy tale I have recited to you.

Mrs. Milville. Well, what did he say ? What did he do ?

Woodville. Your brother, Madam, seemed occupied in business ; he was much surprised at my appearance ; I took the liberty to ask him your address.

Mrs. Milville. What did he say ?

Woodville. That you were unfortunate, and that it was utterly impossible for you to assist me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. But did *he* do nothing for you?

Woodville. Nothing, Madam ; and I do not murmur ; for every one is proprietor of his own fortune, and master of what he possesses. Had he offered me assistance, I should willingly have accepted it ; for I am much distressed for money. Luckily, the people where I lodge are very good, and have promised to wait my convenience.

Mrs. Milville. Dear relation, gold is not quite so plentiful here as at my brother's ; but till something better offers, accept, I entreat you, of this guinea ; it is a debt I pay with joy to a relation, to a friend ; take it ; it is offered with a good heart.

Woodville. Generous lady, you are not much more fortunate than myself ; you have offered me your table, I accept it with thanks—that's enough ; another better able will assist me with money.

Mrs. Milville. Take it, my poor unhappy friend.

Woodville. Will you really distress yourself, in order to relieve me? (*She puts the guinea in his hand, and sheds tears.*) Tears of compassion spring from your eyes ; and I—oh ! oh ! oh ! (*He sheds tears, and kisses the guinea several times, speaks with the most violent emotion, and rises at the same time.*) This piece is precious to me ; I'll keep it—oh God ! I'll keep it all my life.

Mrs. Milville. All his life ! what does he say ?

Woodville. Yes, yes ; all my life ! But, oh ! excellent woman— (*He kisses Mrs. Milville's hand, and the guinea, several times with rapture.*)

D

Forgive

Forgive me for having put to the proof a heart like yours; I can no longer conceal myself—forgive—forgive me—you—

Mrs. Milville. Why all these violent emotions for so slight a favour?

Woodville. Slight! You have fixed in my heart a love that will stick there for ever, and ripen every hour. I am not the poor distressed man you think me; and you are my heirs.

Mrs. Milville. I?

Woodville. Who else deserves the name? Providence has loaded me with riches, and I was willing to make a proper use of them, and did not wish to be deceived in obliging ungrateful relations. My heart was desirous of finding out the virtuous. The hope of fortune too often renders the face of man hypocritical, and makes it assume the appearance of benevolence. In America I formed the plan I have this day put in execution. I was resolved, to try my friends, to appear in want; the good I thought would assist me (and I am not deceived): with them did I determine to share my fortune. I have at last found the heart I searched for, and with it I divide the fortune kind Heaven has bestowed upon me, and do for ever cast off your unworthy brother.

Mrs. Milville. Oh! do not cast him off.

Woodville. Not cast him off? Why, are you of the same blood? Could the wretch see his sister want the common necessities of life? I have not told you all; I received from him the most degrading treatment; I did all I could to move his pity; I assumed the appearance of a man in the most extreme distress; I humbly supplicated;

supplicated; I looked like a man starving; I had the voice of one; and what did I receive? Inhuman refusals! Haughty pride, insulting coolness characterized all his expressions! He turned me out of doors; he used the brutal language of a rich tyrant trampling upon the poor. His wife was still more haughty than himself, and regarded me with an eye that marked the most cruel contempt. I might perhaps have forgiven them; but what I never can forgive, as long as I hold breath, is their barbarous usage of you. A brother, rolling in luxury, to see his sister work for subsistence!—honour, virtue, and every good quality, must be strangers to his heart.

Mrs. Milville. I never asked him to assist me.

Woodville. As the law cannot punish pride and ingratitude, we should be the more severe in chastising those vices. It is a debt due to society (and I'll discharge it), to humble the man that treads upon you. Come, virtuous friend, I shall give you an employment that will, I am sure, please you—to assist the unfortunate; seek for them, bring them to me, and I will give them aid. (*Retiring.*) I have an elegant house, you must come and adorn it; for the most superb palace is a miserable abode without Friendship—let her reign, let her give out her laws. Adieu! (*Shakes her by the hand.*) Adieu!

[*Exit Woodville.*]

Enter Lucy, crying.

Lucy. Oh, my dear mistress!

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Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. Well, Lucy, what's the matter? why do you cry?

Lucy. Oh, my dear mistress! pardon me; I shall cry all day—I heard all the dear good man said.

Mrs. Milville. You were able to support my adversity, and you can't my happiness.

Lucy. No; I feel it too sensibly—*(sobbing very deeply.)* I was sure that—that—P—P—P—Providence would one day reward you.—I must cry; do let me cry—I have so much pleasure in k—k—k—crying, that I shall k—k—k—cry for a year. *[Exeunt. Lucy crying.]*

Scene changes to Mr. Vane's House.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. VANE, and Mr. MULSON.

Mulson. I tell you, I know him well.

Mr. Vane. Pooh, pooh! My dear Mulson, did you observe his dress?

Mulson. Why, his dress a little surprised me, I must confess; but he's a strange character; and I know him to be the rich merchant of Guadeloupe.

Mr. Vane. Ha! ha! ha! How you are mistaken! he's in the greatest distress—he had all the appearance of it, I am sure; he's a poor fellow, I tell you.

Mulson. I wish you were half as rich; I know his face as well as I know my own; he is a widower, has no children, and is master of an immense fortune.

Mrs. Vane. What! an immense fortune, and no children?

Mulson.

Mulson. Exactly so, Madam ; I saw him at Guadaloupe about three years since.

Mr. Vane. Oh ! you must be mistaken ; he came to us to ask charity.

Mulson. Well ! he might have asked charity ; but for all that, he alone is richer than you and all your neighbours put together.

Mr. Vane. Oh ! but he was shipwrecked on the coast of Spain—I recollect reading the circumstance in the morning papers ;—why, he's a cousin of mine.

Mulson. A cousin of yours ?

Mr. Vane. Yes.

Mulson. Then he came to try your friendship for him.

Mr. Vane. What ?

Mulson. That 's his character—in his lifetime he has played many such strange tricks.

Mrs. Vane. You quite alarm me, Mr. Mulson.

Mulson. I can assure you, Madam, what I say is true ; your cousin is the rich merchant of Guadaloupe ;—I have had several mercantile transactions with him.

Mrs. Vane. Is it possible ? Did you see him at Guadaloupe ?

Mr. Vane. We thought him dead twenty years ago—and now to come and beg !

Mulson. He's a strange character, and very fond of surprising people.

Mrs. Vane. Can it be ?

Mulson. He's the most liberal character possible ; and as he was pleasant enough to come and ask charity, you no doubt gave him what he wanted, and it will all end in a good joke.

Mr. Vane. Hey ! but I confess I received him rather coolly.

Mulson. I am sorry for that ; he is equally sensible of ill as of good treatment—for those who regard him, he would go to the world's end to serve.

Mrs. Vane. (*Aside.*) Every word tears my heart.

Mr. Vane. I am devilish-sorry I treated him so roughly. *Mr. Mulson*, I shall disguise nothing from you ; I confess, we did not give him the most friendly reception.

Mulson. How much did—ha ! ha ! ha ! did he ask you to lend him—five hundred ; hey ?

Mr. Vane. Pooh ! what signifies the sum ?

Mulson. I beg your pardon ; you surely could not refuse to lend him five thousand.

Mr. Vane. In the name of friendship, my dear *Mulson*, endeavour to reconcile him to us.

Mulson. Why, what would you have me say ?

Mrs. Vane. Why, say *Mr. Vane* had a thousand things to vex him at the time he called ; that you know his good heart, and the friendship he has for his relations ; that I had been in a bad humour, and had been scolding my servants ; that we love him tenderly ; and that to-morrow we shall pay our respects to him, and he will find us quite different people.

Mulson. You give me rather a disagreeable commission ; but he's an excellent man, and will, I dare say, forget what has happened.

Mrs. Vane. For Heaven's sake, haste !

Mulson

Mulson. I'll do my best;—good morning;—you shall hear of my success. [*Exit Mulson.*]

Mr. Vane. Well, Madam! these are the effects of your haughty conduct; you are the cause of my losing this friend; you have heard he is rich, and has no children—

Mrs. Vane. Peace, blockhead! Was he *my* relation? did *I* know him? Had he been *my* relation, I should not have been such a fool. You are now properly punished for your stupidity.

Mr. Vane. Why, damn it, Madam, was not I going—did I not want—was not my hand in my pocket? was not I going to give him a crown, and did not you prevent me?

Mrs. Vane. Yes, Sir; and I then gratified you—confess it. It was then time, to be sure, after all your ill language to him.

Mr. Vane. If I have acted thus, Madam, it was to conform to your cruel and avaricious mind, that can't bear to give the poor a farthing, though you will fool away thousands upon your fantastical ugly face, and at a card-table;—I blush at your inhumanity, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. You are the meanest of wretches; you did not even know how to refuse him with courage; you were timid and abashed in his presence; you trembled at a man, who, from his outward appearance, did not seem to possess a sixpence.

Mr. Vane. It was your insulting pride that will most provoke him; did—did not you leave the room?—I have no patience with you—did not you—I tell you what, Madam; it's all your fault; you alone are to blame; and as
your

your conduct is the cause of my losing such a chance of enriching myself, you shall be answerable, Madam, for what I have lost.

Mrs. Vane. Yes; I'll be answerable for your folly.

Mr. Vane. If he cuts me off, damn me, but I'll revenge myself on you; I'll reduce you to the strictest economy;—for the sake of saving a miserable crown, you'll see an immense succession go to others.

Mrs. Vane. Go, Sir, throw yourself at his feet, entreat him to forgive you—do any thing that is mean; you are capable of it—

Mr. Vane. That must be your business, Madam; and if you disobey me, we separate;—a woman has always the most influence; therefore go and soften him, or you never see me more.

[*Exit Mr. Vane.*]

Mrs. Vane. What's to be done? This will require great caution, and boldness too.—If I could but have suspected his riches, I would have offered him my house, my horses; nothing should have been too good for him.—Where was my penetration? Oh, Fortune! you have delighted in blinding me to-day; but as you generally favour the audacious, do not think to escape.

[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Woodville's house, elegantly furnished.*

Enter WOODVILLE well-dressed, leading Mrs. MILVILLE.

Woodville.

WELL, my virtuous friend, you are now at home; I have no orders to give here—this is your house; invite to it whom you please; and, when you permit me, I'll be one of your visitors.

Mrs. Milville. This my house! do you think I can enjoy such luxury? It overpowers me.

Woodville. Let your sister, with her insolent airs, see you in this opulence; and may the convulsions of humbled pride eternally torment her!

Mrs. Milville. Sir, you must be sensible, that I neither ought nor can accept of such favours; moderate them, I entreat you: if they become your opulence, they by no means become my situation. You know how I did live; a little more will make me quite content.

Woodville. My amiable friend, that uncle, whose memory will be always dear to me, orders me, from the bottom of his tomb, to act thus; 't is he who inspires me at this moment; what I now do is not from ostentation, but to

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give

give an example to the rich, to learn them never to despise the poor; to shew them, that, in one turn of her wheel, Fortune may raise those that were at her feet, and crush those at her summit. Let this lesson, if possible, curb the insolence too common to the rich. (*He rings—enter several Servants.*) Here are your servants, Madam; you will always find them ready to obey your commands. Every thing you see here is yours. (*He takes the guinea from his pocket.*) This guinea, that I will for ever keep and revere; this guinea, that might indeed have saved me from starving—this proves that you will honour riches, in making a worthy use of them.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Sir, Mr. Mulson wishes to speak with you.

Woodville. Mulson!—Will you permit me to receive him?—Shew him in. [*Exit Servant.*]

Enter MULSON.

Mulson. Ah! who thought to see you in Europe!—But how came you to conceal yourself so long?

Woodville. Because I was ruined; I was shipwrecked, and some time ago they killed me in this country; I am, nevertheless, tolerably well.—Joking apart, though, I was near being drowned.

Mulson. Ay, ay, you lost nothing; the sea is very covetous, but can't devour all.

Woodville. I have something left for myself and friends.

Mulson.

Mulson. I believe so ; and you are now come to enjoy yourself in the bosom of your relations.—By the by, I am charged to bring you the congratulations, the excuses, the respects of two who are very much attached to you.

Woodville. Whom, if you please ?

Mulson. Mr. and Mrs. Vane—as good people as can be : I am one of their intimate friends.

Woodville. One of their intimate friends !—Do you know that lady ?

Mulson. I have not the honour.

Woodville. What ! frequent Mr. Vane's house—his intimate friend ; and not know that lady ?—That lady is his sister, Sir.

Mulson. His sister ! what, has Mr. Vane a sister ? (*He bows to her.*) Why, Sir, I know all that has happened ; but at the bottom they are very good people, and they hope you will pardon the reception they gave you ; they beg of you to allow them to visit you, to apologize for their coolness to you.

Woodville. Sir, I see you are come here as a mediator. Well, Sir, I'll see them.

Mulson. (*Aside.*) I've succeeded famously—Well ! I'll carry them the agreeable news of your reconciliation ; they'll be delighted, I assure you. [*Exit.*]

Woodville. And can they have the insolence to come ?—that's rather too much : in that case I shall have my turn.

Mrs. Milville. Dear cousin, good and generous as you are, I'll take upon me to speak in their favour.

Woodville. This is worthy of your noble mind ; but they must be made to feel. 'Tis

not me they have insulted, but the poor and helpless—the poor concealed under the coat I wore; 'tis *them* they have inhumanly trod upon, and my resentment is just. What right has a rich man to bear down his fellow-creature?, instead of feeling for his wants, to treat him with contempt and ridicule?—No! such pride should be punished, and the love of order requires, that the haughty man, who treads upon the head of his fellow-subject, should, in his turn, be humiliated.

Mrs. Milville. Did not you say he was going to give you something, and his wife prevented him?

Woodville. Yes! a crown, perhaps, to get rid of me; I, however, wish him no harm; but since he'll condescend to any base, mean action, for the sake of money, it is but fair to torment him, and before his eyes to reward the virtuous. My revenge goes no further.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. VANE.

Mrs. Vane. My dear cousin, what an odd creature you are! Where do you learn these droll tricks of yours?—To be sure it was the most laughable—Ha! ha! ha!—

Woodville. Ha! ha! ha!—It made you laugh, Madam; did it?

Mr. Vane. Ha! ha! ha!—You acted your part to admiration.—Ha! ha! ha!

Woodville. And so did you—and you, Madam.

Mr. Vane. We are just come to ex—ex—explain the—the—the—the—

Mrs.

Mrs. Vane. Ye—ye—yes, my dear cousin ; we are very sorry to have received you so coolly—be—be—but—

Woodville. But, Madam, this is not my abode ; you are now in the house of your sister-in-law. (*He sits down at the further end of the room, and takes up a book, which he continues reading occasionally.*)

Mrs. Vane. I am overjoyed at my dear sister's good fortune ;—but you are really the most extraordinary person possible.

Woodville. No, Madam ; there are others equally extraordinary, and equally ridiculous.

Mrs. Vane. You look charmingly, my dear sister ; you seem so contented, so happy—

Woodville. She will be more and more so, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. And your dear children, how do they do ? They—

Woodville. Have had time to grow since you saw them last, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. And yours, Madam ?

Woodville. Have you any children, Madam ?

Mrs. Vane. Yes ; they are at school.

Woodville. You'll do well to leave them there, Madam ; and, above all things, take care not to educate them yourself.

Mrs. Vane. Our dear cousin is still a little cruel.

Mr. Vane. We confess our faults, and we are now come to make reparation for them.

Mrs. Vane. Our dear cousin has too much sense to think any more of what has passed :—half London would have been deceived, and have acted in the same way.

Woodville.

Woodville. The inhabitants of the metropolis are much indebted to you, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. Dear sister, endeavour to make peace for us.

Mrs. Mitville. It is my sincerest wish.

Mrs. Vane. (*After a little silence.*) Gua—Gua—Guadaloupe is said, Sir, to be a very fine country, a delightful climate, a—a—a— Our dear cousin seems very fond of reading; I'll take the liberty of sending him some books from my library; I have some that are very much esteemed.

Woodville. I read but little, Madam; but I have by chance stumbled upon a book that pleases me much.

Mrs. Vane. What is it, dear cousin?

Woodville. A selection of verses—they begin with “Verses on a Coat.” (*Reading.*) “Verses on a Coat,”—that will shew you, Madam, a man who sees and feels—far superior to those verses addressed to the zephyrs, and to the opera-girls—I am highly pleased with it, (*Reads.*)

“ VERSES ON A COAT.

“ Oh, my coat! how I thank you,
How much I am indebted to you;
I enter a room, am not ask'd to sit down,
Receiv'd with a haughty and insolent frown!”

Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Vane. How well our cousin reads!

Woodville. Ay, and feels too, Madam: the author, in speaking of Holland, says,

“ Here the *man* makes the coat of consequence,
And not the *coat* the man of consequence.”

—There is, however, nothing so enviable as money; nothing else is worth living for; we should be slaves to money, do any thing mean for money.—Always shut your door against the poor man, hear not his complaints, turn him out of your house, tread upon him—

Mrs. Vane. Be not so severe; believe me, we sincerely repent of what has passed; your generosity to my sister creates in me neither envy nor jealousy; I rejoice at her good fortune, and I only want her friendship and yours.

Woodville. (Rises.) Are you sincere, Madam? Do you really rejoice at her prosperity? I may be mistaken; and if so, if you really, from the bottom of your heart, love her, I'll forget all that has passed, and will neither be unjust nor revengeful; I know that virtuous sentiments will sometimes lie dormant in us without being stifled, and rise when the heart is really moved. We have all too much need for indulgence, and should pardon the repentant;—if what you say is sincere, I freely forgive you. *(He rings.—Enter an Attorney, with papers, &c. Servants.)* I here make a free gift of all my fortune to this worthy woman—friendship and justice demand it; all the world shall know what I have done for her, and why I have done so; I will expose to all the world the noble and generous manner in which she relieved me, and I then think all the world will applaud me.—My dear friend, I here offer you my hand; our hearts are, I am sure, alike.

Mrs. Milville. Oh, my benefactor! you deserve a better woman.

Woodville. A better!—This guinea *(takes out the*

the guinea, and looks earnestly at it) tells me a better cannot live.—Come, Madam—*(to Mrs. Vane)*—every thing is forgot, and now witness the happiness of your sister and myself.

Mrs. Vane. (With great agitation.) I shall expire with rage.—Never, never! inhuman man!

Woodville. Take her hence. *(Mrs. Vane is conducted out, almost fainting; Mr. Vane following her, and looking very down-hearted.)* Cruel and ungrateful woman! she is not even worthy of my vengeance, and I almost repent of it. *(Takes Mrs. Milville by the hand.)*—Let us, however, forget, in the bosom of friendship, that there exist hearts so base and envious.

[*Exit* *una.*]

THE

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. JAMES WALLACE.

Spoken by Mr. LEE.

AGAIN old Custom's laws must we obey—
A truce to preface, then ; what think you of the play?
Yet not so fast—perhaps I may be his'd :
And being something of a physiognomist,
Before I spout, I'll take a slight survey,
Then tell our author what the audience say.

Encourag'd thus by women kind and pretty,
(From whence, no matter—St. James's or the city,) I
may proceed :—yet stop—one squint at Pit,
For there it is the solemn jury sit.

Up gets haughty Wisdom ! Upon my word,
To introduce such stuff is quite absurd ;
This tale of pity, and this virtue's grace,
Ill suit the passions of a watering-place !
Avaunt, roars timber Jack, with scenes of sorrow,
I steers away from Guadaloupe to-morrow ;
Besides these nasty wapours, dowsie my beaver,
Mayhap we carry home the yellow fever !!!
D. I. O. slips Cheapside Dick, in salted jacket,
Just from on board the hoy—I meant the packet ;
I took a sail down here to laugh, not cry.
What says pouting Miss there ?—Yes, so did I.

Well, well! don't fret, for now the play is done,
And soon, good folks, you'll see much better fun;
Here, take a taste—our Margate pastime is,
To chatter scandal, ogle, stare, and quiz,
Touch up the auctioneer, gape at Bonaparte,
And now and then we win and lose a *heart*.
Our playwright's sorry jade, with prose so big,
He knows can neither run with ass or pig!
'Mid the droll sports that take their jingling round,
He only tried how sentiment would sound:
Disguis'd in rags, his wealthy Merchant came
To punish vice, and prosper virtue's name,
The proud to mortify, the poor to bless,
And give, to those who merit, happiness.
The Poet's moral then, if understood,
Though out of practice, is in precept good.
As now my grateful eyes look round, they trace
A Woodville's virtues glowing on each face:
Contempt for riches when they're misapplied,
But reverence for them when to worth allied.
Mistake not, then, the generous aim in view;
This lesson is for others, not for you.
Good-nature beams and flatters on each side,
For charity is Thanet's greatest pride.

THE END.

